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MR. ROMANES'S CATECHISM

LIONEL A. TOLLEMACHE



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MR. ROMANES'S CATECHISM.

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with Additions and Sequel.*

BY THE
HON. LIONEL A. TOLLEMACHE.

"There are only two true religions: one which worships, without any symbol, the Holy that is within us and around us; another which represents it by the most beautiful of symbols. Every other religion is idolatry."

GOETHE.

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.

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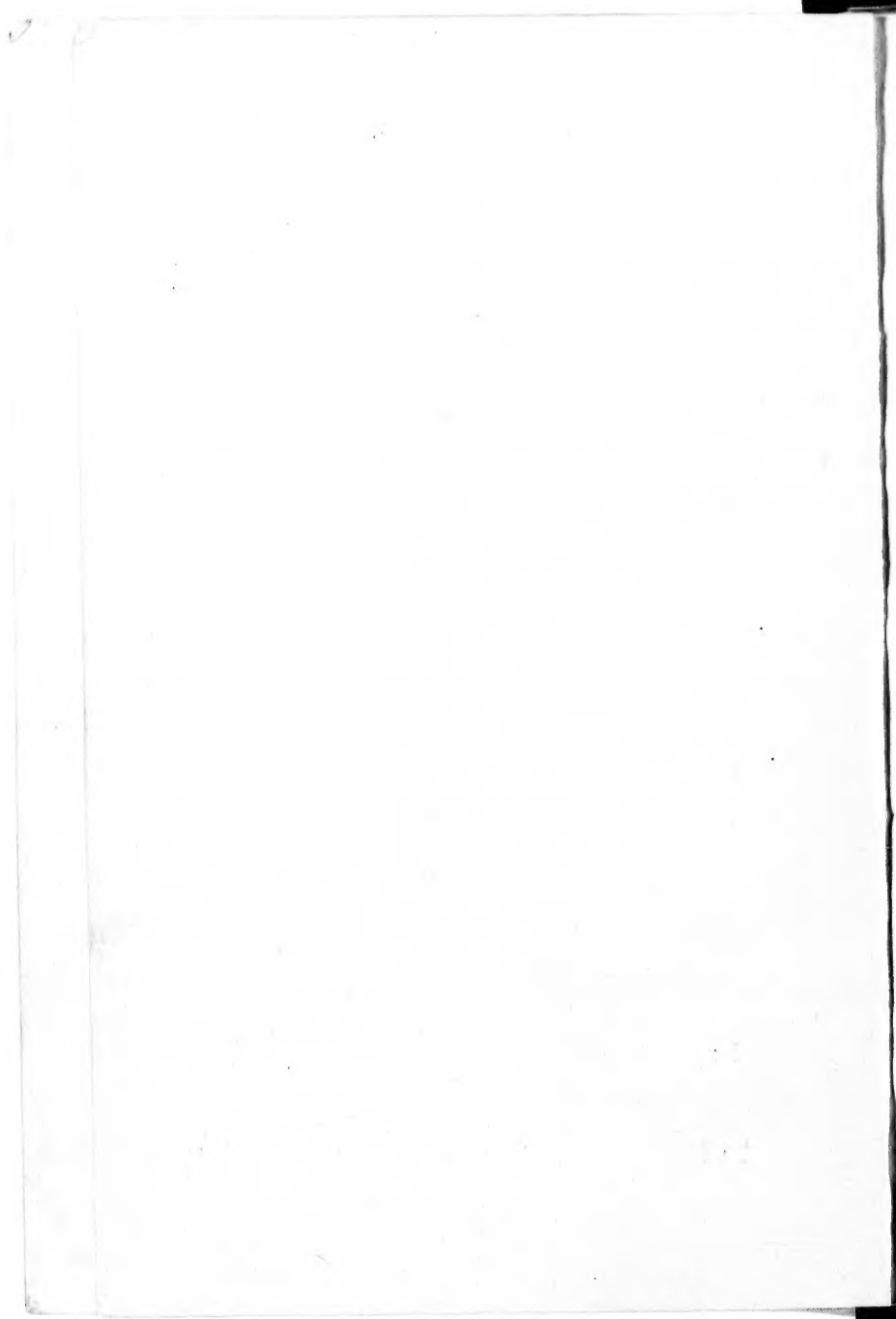
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CONTENTS.

MR. ROMANES'S CATECHISM	...	...	...	...	1
NEOCHRISTIANITY AND NEOCATHOLICISM : A SEQUEL	...	...	...	...	22



MR. ROMANES'S CATECHISM.

Mr. GEORGE J. ROMANES, while engaged in collecting materials for a forthcoming work on the Evolution of Man, drew up and distributed extensively the following minute and searching interrogations. It has seemed to me that my friends, and possibly others, will be interested in reading a full and candid *confessio fidei* on a subject which is generally avoided—the personal view of death.

1.—Do you regard the prospect of your own death (A) with indifference, (B) with dislike, (C) with dread, or (D) with inexpressible horror?

2.—If you entertain any fear of death at all, is the cause of it (A) prospect of bodily suffering only, (B) dread of the unknown, (C) idea of loneliness and separation from friends, or (D), in addition to all or any of these, a peculiar horror of an indescribable kind?

3.—Is the state of your belief with regard to a future life that of (A) virtual conviction that there is a future life, (B) suspended judgment inclining towards such belief, (C) suspended judgment inclining against such belief, or (D) virtual conviction that there is no such life?

4.—Is your religious belief, if any, (A) of a vivid order,

or (B) without much practical influence on your life and conduct?

5.—Is your temperament naturally of (A) a courageous, or (B) of a timid order, as regards the prospect of bodily pain or mental distress?

6.—More generally, do you regard your own disposition as (A) strong, determined, and self-reliant; (B) nervous, shrinking, and despondent; or (C) medium in this respect?

7.—Should you say that in your character the intellectual or the emotional predominates? Does your intellect incline to abstract or concrete ways of thought? Is it theoretical, practical, or both? Are your emotions of the tender or heroic order, or both? Are your tastes in any way artistic, and, if so, in what way? And with what strength?

8.—What is your age or occupation? Can you trace any change in your feelings with regard to death as having taken place during the course of your life?

9.—If ever you have been in danger of death, what were the circumstances, and what your feelings?

10.—Remarks.

Es sagen's aller Orten
 Alle Herzen unter dem himmlischen Tage,
 Jedes in seiner Sprache;
 Warum nicht ich in der meinen?—FAUST.

As my experiences are very peculiar, and are indicated in a veiled form in my writings, I hope I may be excused if I make frequent reference to those writings, and at the same time withdraw the veil. This remark applies especially to my *Recollections of Pattison*. In seeking to explain his cynicism, I have used myself as a key, insomuch that the general reflections contained in

the part between pages 25 and 69* give a rather minute autobiography. There is, however, the difference between his case and mine, that my ideal has always been stoical rather than saintly, and that, happily for me, no troubles have embittered my life like those that embittered his.

1 and 2.—When I am well, I regard the prospect of being dead with feelings bordering on indifference. But I feel a great dread of the bodily suffering of dying, and a still greater dread (as my temperament is extremely nervous) of my nerves becoming unstrung, and of my then being unmanned by the prospect of the unknown (*Pattison*, p. 78, especially footnote). The dread of "loneliness and separation from friends" affects me in regard to their death, not mine. As a child, I used to let spiders and wasps crawl about me; but I always felt a repugnance to touching any dead animal.

3.—"Il y a un ésotérisme inévitable, puisque la culture critique, scientifique, philosophique n'est à la portée que d'une minorité. La foi nouvelle devra trouver ses symboles. Pour le moment, elle fait plutôt aux âmes pieuses l'effet profane. . . . L'illusion n'est-elle pas indispensable ? n'est-ce pas le procédé providentiel de l'éducation ?"—AMIEL.

In dealing with this question, I propose to

* This corresponds to the part between pp. 143 and 187 in *Stones of Stumbling*, second edition. As many of my friends have my *Pattison* in the separate form, I shall hereafter refer to it in that form.

inquire whether the conception of a future life is not being gradually modified so as to suit the needs of a scientific age. Two centuries ago, the eminently devout author of *Religio Medici* felt a difficulty in believing in the Judgment Day as commonly understood. It must be owned that this difficulty is increased by modern astronomy; for the apostolic belief in a sudden, immediate, and supernatural Second Advent, to be followed by a reign of the saints on earth, is hard to reconcile with the scientific belief in the future extinction, by a slow, natural process, of all life on our planet. In short, at least one early Christian doctrine is virtually assailed by Tennyson, in his regretful lines :

"Many an Æon moulded earth before her highest, man,
was born,
Many an Æon too may pass when earth is manless and
forlorn."

This change of opinion may explain my seeming paradox when I say that I am sometimes embarrassed by the present meaning of the term "future life." What are the conditions of that life, and what sort of *Ego* is to survive? One clergyman represents heaven as consisting

"Of sexless souls, ideal choirs,
Unuttered voices, wordless strains."

Another (the author of *The Kernel and the Husk*)

after premising that the three lowest senses (smell, taste, and touch) are already banished from heaven, insists that sight and hearing must be banished too; but that withal the capacity of loving will be preserved. If we still retain our mental faculties, is there not a fear that, after a few billions of years, we shall grow tired of this very unearthly and inconceivable mode of existence? Or, again, if death annihilates the senses, will it leave the emotions unimpaired? In other words, if (as Dr. Maudsley, and even Professor Huxley, maintain) mind is a "function of brain," is it not as hard to suppose the individual mind surviving the decomposition of the brain, as to suppose, I will not say fire burning after the exhaustion of its fuel, but the eyesight continuing after the destruction of the optic nerve? In fact, is not modern scientific opinion tending towards the conclusion of Lucretius that, even as trees cannot live in the sky, nor fishes in the fields,

"Sic animi natura nequit sine corpore oriri
Sola, neque a nervis et sanguine longiter esse" ?

It is perhaps needless to dwell on the difficulty of conceding a soul to Bushmen, and denying one to our semi-human ancestors, to gorillas, to jelly-fish; or on the difficulty of expecting that our

posthumous selves will be better able to remember our present selves, than we are to remember our antenatal selves. I will, however, remark that the latter difficulty reaches further than at first sight appears. According to the philosophy of Lucretius,* it follows from the law of chances that the particles of matter which now compose my body may, at some inconceivably remote period, fall again into shape, and constitute another living man; but this *alter ego* will not be a revival of my present self, for he will not remember my present self. That is to say, the power of recollection, the *repetentia nostri*, is a necessary condition of personal identity.† Yet this necessary condition, this condition which alone prevented the apostle of annihilation from believing *literally* in the Resur-

* Lucretius III., 847—861.

† Clough, in his fifth Sonnet, *On the Thought of Death*, suggests that some dim hope might be drawn from a yet stranger hypothesis—the hypothesis apparently that, by the operation of natural laws through countless ages, worlds will be made and unmade, until, at last, *Alter ab integro seclorum nascitur ordo*. According to this weird supposition, there will haply be another England (an exact counterpart of the present), another Victorian Jubilee, and another Mr. Romanes perplexing our future namesakes with his Mortuary Catechism! Assuming the principles of Evolution, together with *infinite* time and the subjection of volition to law, few mathematicians would pronounce the recurrence of such a cycle to be quite incredible; but where will be the *repetentia nostri*?

rection of the Body, Tennyson, in *The Two Voices*,
is prepared to throw overboard :

"Some draught of Lethe might await
The slipping thro' from state to state."

Indeed, if I rightly interpret the preceding stanza,

"It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but *cycles always round*,"

the poet has for a moment found himself on a
standpoint not wholly unlike the Epicurean one.

A few examples will serve to show the sort of
influence that such considerations as the above
are exercising over Liberal Christians. An eminent
Broad Church clergyman, writing to me about *The
Service of Man*, says, "The religion of a people
stands in a definite relation to its culture," and
adds the remark (in which I heartily agree) that
it is generally safer to let science and criticism
work the needful changes in the national creed,
than to attempt an iconoclastic subversion.
Another Liberal divine tells me that he is little
troubled by the mistakes which seem to be con-
tained in the conversations reported in the Gospels;
for he looks forward to a future revelation which
will modify and complete Christianity, as Chris-
tianity has modified Judaism. Fourteen years
ago, when I was writing my article on Tennyson's
social philosophy, I talked the matter over with

Principal Tulloch. He called my attention to the doubts expressed by the poet as to whether Christianity is intended to be the ultimate phase of religious belief. I asked whether he was referring to the mention of "the Christ that is to be," and to the statement that "our little systems" of religion are but "broken lights," and that "they have their day and cease to be." He replied that, besides these passages, there are others that convey the same impression. My own comments on this topic have been made elsewhere.* I will now merely observe that, though I have no sympathy with the critic who satirised the "demi-semi-Christianity" of *In Memoriam*, I cannot but feel that the difference is fundamental between those who regard the value of religious dogmas as absolute and permanent, and those who regard it as merely relative and temporary. In fact, the difference is closely connected with the gradual transition (noticed by Pattison in his *Assize Sermon*) from the subordination of morality to religion, to the subordination of religion to morality. The less orthodox view has lately been upheld with rare honesty and courage by Canon Fremantle, who goes the length of maintaining that statements about God and the soul are mostly to be understood in a "literary," not a scientific

* *Safe Studies*, pp. 204-210.

or even a "quasi-scientific" sense. To those who censure such a symbolical exegesis as uncandid, I answer that the beginning of Genesis is commonly explained in a manner which, fifty years ago, would have been thought blasphemous; and all that enlightened Conservatives desire is that the same mode of interpretation which clergyman after clergyman applies to the first two chapters of the Bible should also be applied to the last two—that a spiritual, as opposed to a materialistic, conception should be extended from the past Paradise of Adam to the future Paradise of God. Let me add that such writers as Arthur Stanley, when speaking of the beatitude of heaven, decline to make any confident assertions about it, save that it involves Rest in God and posthumous influence for good. I lately asked a very learned and not unorthodox clergyman, whether this tendency to throw posthumous personality into the background, and to regard heaven as union with God, did not seem to him a striking peculiarity of our time. "Substantially," he replied, "this has always been the creed of Christian mystics, whether Catholic or Protestant."* The assertion surprised me; but perhaps, when one reflects on it, it throws light on the state of mind

* Compare the poem called *A Sea-change* (*Safe Studies*, p. 413).

which Christian self-abnegation, carried to its furthest point, tends to produce. "The end and aim of our life," says Kingsley, "is not happiness, but goodness. If goodness comes first, then happiness may come after; but, if not, something better than happiness may come, even blessedness." The remark clearly applies to the comparative value of happiness and blessedness, or rather of enjoyment and blessedness (these two being parts or modes of *happiness*), beyond the grave. *Faciam voluntatem tuam, sicut in terra, et in caelo*, might serve as a counterpart to the most comprehensive petition in the Lord's Prayer, and ought to satisfy, and is beginning to satisfy, our spiritual needs. Hence it appears that, as culture advances, our conception of heaven slowly changes its character; the notion of enjoyment fades into the notion of blessedness. For while, on the one hand, biology obscures our belief in posthumous enjoyment, spiritual religion, on the other hand, sets little value on enjoyment and great value on blessedness. Thus it is in such ideals as the blessedness of self-devotion, and as the Present Heaven of the Fourth Gospel, that a bond of sympathy is found between religious natures otherwise the most opposed.* *Amem te*

* Tauler, the fourteenth century mystic, after quoting the remarkable saying of Jesus (a saying all the more remarkable

plus quam me, neque me nisi propter te, are words which express the aspirations of the greatest of Christian mystics; they also express the aspirations of Comte, whose favourite motto they were. "Ye are dead," says St. Paul, "and your life is hid with Christ in God." In the same spirit, a Neo-Christian might apostrophize the wise and good who have passed away: "Ye are not dead, for your life is hid with Christ in God." To each of them he might apply (in a spiritual sense) the words addressed by Beatrice to Dante:—

"Sarai meco senza fine cive
Di quella Roma onde Cristo è Romano."

The most extreme view of the ultimate tendency of spiritual Christianity is embodied in a passage by James Hinton (a spiritual Christian if ever there was one):—

"Surely the desire of personal immortality is not truly a noble or worthy attitude of humanity. At least, it is not the highest. Granted it was an advance in humanity to attain to it, but may it not be a greater to give it up? Man rose to it from less, from indifference; he should give it up for more, for self-sacrifice."

Personally, in spite of logic, and as an aid to my spiritual life, I try to maintain a beatific vision

because reported by a Synoptist), "The kingdom of God is within you," asks: "If, now, the being and essence of our soul is in heaven, and God is in it, what is to blame that we have not this heaven here, and do not know God?"

which from the nature of the case is such that, if it be an illusion, I shall never be undeceived. Let me add that, in thus *walking by faith*, I am following the example of Clough, who, while admitting that "wishes vain appear," yet, on the strength of those wishes, determines to believe in a vague something, a something in which posthumous usefulness is seemingly the chief ingredient :

" Ah yet, when all is thought and said,
The heart still overrules the head ;
Still what we hope we must believe,
And what is given us, receive ;
Must still believe, for still we hope
That, in a world of larger scope,
What here is faithfully begun
Will be completed, not undone."

It is, I suppose, in this limited sense—the sense of being not logical overmuch nor overwise—that Goethe understands his sweeping proposition,

Wen Gott betrügt, ist wohl betrogen.

Elsewhere he says that "Only what is fruitful is true";* that the art of living consists in "turning the problems of life into postulates"; and that "Man must in some sort cling to the belief that the unknowable is knowable, otherwise specu-

* This and some other sayings of Goethe recall Keats's lines :—

" Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

lation would cease;" or rather, there would be no *modus vivendi* for philosophers with the vast majority of good men and women. (*Pattison*, p. 79.)

4.—"On ne brise pas avec le passé sans y laisser le meilleur de soi . . . Le mythe et le rite sont l'alliage à la fois dés-honorant et indispensable, sans lequel le métal serait trop pur pour servir aux usages des hommes."—SCHERRER.

I call myself a philosophical Anglican. Stanley's very remarkable exposition of the Apostle's Creed (in *Christian Institutions*) has hardly a sentence which I should wish to see altered. Also, I have long since been so far a Hobbist as to think that most men, and (perhaps) all women, need religious observances (*Pattison*, p. 72), and that a philosopher's creed consists, not of the extreme conclusions to which his principles might lead, but of the sentiments and symbols with which he clothes his aspirations after the ideal, and which connect him with the poetry of the past and the present modes of thought of the religious world. "Entre tous ceux qui croient à l'idéal," says Renan, "quelles que soient leurs apparentes divergences, il n'y a qu'une différence dans la manière de parler." Our notions about man's origin and destiny are merely symbolical and relative; and, in dealing with such questions, I, as an Englishman, choose Liberal Anglicanism as

the most helpful and edifying of the seemingly conflicting, but really harmonious, answers that are given by the good men and women in the many mansions of our Father's house. This very spiritualised religion has no very direct or conscious influence on my life; but, of course, the fact of belonging to a Christian community has a great indirect influence.

5.—I am very sensitive to pain. In my youth I suffered much from nervous weakness due wholly to physical causes, and have always been obliged to take great care of my health.

6.—Owing to my nervous temperament, I am unreasonably pained if my friends disapprove of my opinions and conduct. But, being aware of this weakness, I struggle against it. Friends have sometimes said that I am one of the most cheerful persons they ever met. They saw me, I suspect, under favourable circumstances.

7.—My mind is abnormally analytical. It inclines to abstract ways of thought. It is strictly theoretical; but the consciousness of this one-sidedness throws me on my guard and makes me willing to take advice, and I thus become to a certain extent practical. Doctors say that I am the

best patient they ever had. My temperament is not heroic, but inclined to a stoical love of justice. I am "the one in a thousand" who, according to Bagehot (*Pattison*, p. 32), takes the world too much *au sérieux*; and, indeed, the pages 32—36 in *Pattison* are strictly autobiographical. In pages 46 to 51, I have tried to show the steps by which I have come, if not to a mild form of Pyrrhonism, at least to ethical views closely allied to those of Edmond Scherer (quoted in *Pattison*, p. 49, foot-note). When unwell, I am troubled rather than amused by such ethical puzzles as those mentioned in pp. 47, 48, and by others equally grave (*Stones of Stumbling*, p. 20). In consequence of this abnormal tendency, or rather of the need of struggling against it, I am by degrees caring less and less for Juvenal, and even Lucretius, and more and more for Horace. And, if I am sometimes afraid of becoming too partial to works written more or less in a Horatian spirit—such works as Erasmus's *Laus Stultitiae*—I console myself with the thought that, although Luther was a far greater man than Erasmus, a nation with one Luther and fifty Erasmuses would be in less imminent danger of a revolution than a nation with one Erasmus and fifty Luthers.

I feel very strong sympathies, though only with comparatively few persons. I am much affected

by the painful in fiction. I have vowed never again to see "Othello" acted, and I much dislike even reading it. I feel each year an increasing need of the sympathy of good women (*Pattison*, pp. 16, 17).^{*} I do not know one tune from another, and (perhaps owing to my eyesight) care little about pictures. But I am fond of poetry, and I am especially fascinated by the music of Shelley. My ear is fastidious about the cadence of sentences in prose.

8.—Forty - nine. — Anthropology, including Gynæcology (*Pattison*, p. 22). As a writer, I am thoroughly handicapped by the causes mentioned in the preface to *Safe Studies*. I am thus constrained to concentrate my efforts on an end which seems to me too limited and self-regarding, but which Goethe extols as the sum and substance of all wisdom :—

Die Welt zu kennen und sie nicht verachten.

Pattison called me a "*philosophe errant*" (p. 68, to end of paragraph). In my Calvinistic boyhood,

* A traveller in Egypt tells me that, among the random inscriptions with which tourists have defaced the monuments of antiquity, only one struck him as at all witty. A Frenchman had scrawled on one of the tombs of the kings, at Thebes, "La vie est un désert"; to which was added, by a later hand, "et la femme le chameau."

though I was thoroughly in earnest, I had not much spiritual enthusiasm. Still less was I animated by the hope of what may be called the honours and rewards of other-worldliness—a patent of posthumous nobility and a pension from the funds of eternity. On the contrary, as I vainly endeavoured to love the Author of Hell, I expected to become one of its inmates (“they that love Thee not Must burn eternally”). I am less afraid of death now than I then was! (*Stones of Stumbling*, pp. 39, 40.)

9.—I never have been in serious danger. Though sometimes very unwell, I have not spent a day indoors for twenty-six years.

10.—“Le ciel n’a rien de local, et n’est autre chose que l’union avec Dieu et avec tous les êtres bons et grands.”—
RENAN.

It is instructive to observe that Reuss and others give to the word “materialism” a meaning the opposite of its popular one; they use the word to denote belief in a material kingdom of God. Even Stanley has employed the word in this sense. Mr. Matthew Arnold rarely, if ever, employs it in any other sense; he even stretches the term “materialism of the Apocalypse” so as seemingly to make it cover the belief in any conceivable form of posthumous joy or sorrow. Possibly this

novel use of the term may be connected with the fact that some philosophers, and even divines,* are unable to accept the popular doctrine in its literal sense ; and, I will add, they are not unable only, but unwilling. For such unwillingness two reasons may be given. In *Safe Studies* (bottom of p. 389) I have hinted at the difficulty of believing that the Universe will ever be exempt from evil. More recently, Mr. Froude (in *Oceana*) has expressed a similar fear : " If the Devil had been capable of redemption, he would have been redeemed before he had been allowed to do so much mischief." Now, if Evil is to last as long as Good, the popular doctrine becomes simply appalling. Bee-fanciers use a net-work of wire with holes just big enough to let the working bees into the hive, and just small enough to exclude the drones. It is very hard to devise a philosophical net-work which will let in even a minimum of posthumous hope, and yet keep out even a minimum of posthumous

* See the extremely spiritualised account of Christ's continual presence in the Church, in Stanley's *Christian Institutions*, pp. 37, 38. Stanley insists that one's best and inmost self is not the more conscious *Ego*, and confirms his opinion by the weighty text, "The flesh profiteth nothing, the words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life."

fear;* and even a very small fear of "boundless worse" is enough to poison a very ample hope of "boundless better" (*Pattison*, p. 78, foot-note). Sir James Fitzjames Stephen hints that God may be a Being of limited benevolence, or at least of limited philanthropy. From this unpleasing hypothesis might it not follow that we may, here and hereafter, be made to suffer for the welfare of other beings, higher and more numerous than we are; and that this welfare may be of a kind which we can no more fathom than a guinea-pig

* The doubt as to whether Ahriman will be less able to hold his own in the next world than in this, is expressed by Clough in the melancholy lines:

"Whither depart the souls of the brave that die in the
battle,
Die in the lost, lost fight, for the cause that perishes
with them?
Are they upborne from the field on the slumberous
pinions of angels
Unto a far-off home, where the weary rest from their
labour
And the deep wounds are healed, and the bitter and
burning moisture
Wiped from the generous eyes? Or do they linger,
unhappy,
Pining, and haunting the grave of their by-gone hope and
endeavour?
Whither depart the brave?—God knows; I certainly do
not."

can appreciate the far-sighted beneficence that dooms him to vivisection? Or, to put a less extreme case, even the sanguine Goethe dreaded the prospect of perpetual *ennui*. After all, is not the *Nox est perpetua una dormienda* of Catullus less dispiriting than the *Pallidula, rigida, nudula* of Hadrian?

And this brings me to my second point. The spiritual conception of heaven, as neither more nor less than union with God, is not really depressing if taken in its entirety. The same may be said even of the negations of Lucretius, as he himself has well pointed out. But, practically, it is hard to think of the loss of personal consciousness without thinking also that we shall be personally conscious of the loss. Even Pattison spoke with dismay of being deprived of his library by death, as if he expected after death to feel the deprivation. An aged kinswoman of mine expressed dread of being buried in a damp family-vault; whereupon a privileged butler broke in with the remark, "Indeed, ma'am, you needn't be the least afraid; I was down there myself the other day, and it's quite dry and comfortable." The old servant was right. If his mistress was afraid of posthumous rheumatism, it was wise to tell her that her resting-place would be dry. The same principle holds in regard to more serious con-

solutions.* Unconscious or impersonal blessedness, if presented to the imagination without being foreshortened, is seen wholly out of perspective; it seems like consciousness of unconsciousness, or rather of impotence—a sort of perpetual nightmare. And thus, if it is impossible to help trying to conceive the inconceivable, the least misleading course may be to think and speak in metaphor, so that our heaven may be defined *a state of blessedness symbolised as a place of enjoyment*.

* See Matthew Arnold's Sonnet on *The East End*, which concludes with the line:—

"Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home."

Perhaps it is in a sense not wholly unlike this that Renan makes the broad, if not cynical, assertion: "La religion n'est pas seulement philosophie, elle est art; il ne faut donc pas lui demander d'être trop raisonnable." Does he mean that religion is no more than a politic gilding of morality and a poetic gilding of the tomb? I am tempted to add the name of another very able writer who seems to value the hope of a future life chiefly as giving a higher pulsation to the present life. It would be an exaggeration, but a pardonable one, to extract from *Marius the Epicurean* the moral, "Let us dream of immortality, for to-morrow we die."

NEOCHRISTIANITY AND NEOCATHOLICISM:

A SEQUEL.

"Ungefähr sagt das der Pfarrer auch,
Nur mit ein bischen andern Worten."
Faust.

AFTER I had replied to Mr. Romanes's Catechism, my attention was called to Mr. Mivart's most interesting and surprising article on *The Catholic Church and Biblical Criticism*,* an article which may serve to explain the Neochristian tone of my answers. To my amazement, I find that portions of those answers, and the chief arguments in my *Divine Economy of Truth*, are in accordance with the latest phase of Catholic orthodoxy. Mr. Mivart courageously exhorts his fellow-Catholics to lay aside all dogmatic bias in dealing with the results of Biblical criticism. He does not, indeed, commit himself to all the conclusions of such writers as Colenso and Kuenen; but he quotes those conclusions with sympathy, and thinks that "there can be little doubt that, in the main,

* *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1887.

they represent the truth." Among the opinions that he thus quotes are the following:—"The account, as we read it, of the deliverance from the Egyptian captivity is unhistorical, although it is not doubted that Moses existed and did lead the Israelites from Egypt. But it is not deemed probable that a line of the Bible was written by him," (what then, I would ask, becomes of the popular view of the Decalogue?) "and the whole Levitical legislation is regarded as an invention which dates from the Babylonian Captivity and times more recent." The year of Jubilee "was utterly unpractical, and was never practised." The first chapter of Genesis was written after the Captivity. The story of Jacob wrestling with God is "gross mythology" (is not, I ask, the belief in eternal punishment yet grosser?). "When I was a boy, at Oscott, I was taught that the book of Jonah was only a parable." "It is thought to be in the highest degree unlikely that Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob ever really existed, and no passage of the history of any one of them is of the slightest historical value in the old sense; though, of course, every old writing has historical value in some sense. Similarly, Daniel, dating, as it has long been concluded to do, only from about B.C. 164, is, of course, thought quite untrustworthy, and little more than a mass of fiction." "Who,

in the sixteenth century, would have deemed it possible for the Church to allow that her doctrines concerning the Biblical narrative of the creation of Adam, and the miraculous formation of Eve from his rib, could accord with a belief that the ribs of both Adam and Eve were formed by natural generation in the womb of some non-human animal? Yet we have lived to witness this event." "If any Scripture narrative is detailed and distinct, it is that of the Deluge, which is also referred to in the New Testament. Nevertheless, no one now, of any account, even professes to believe the truth of the narrative we read, although it may be based on a tradition of some considerable local inundation." The author adds, in a foot-note:—"I well recollect dining at a priest's house (in or about 1870), when one of the party, the late accomplished Mr. Richard Simpson, of Clapham (a most pious Catholic and weekly communicant), expressed some ordinary scientific views on the subject of the Deluge. A startled auditor asked anxiously,—'But is not, then, the account in the Bible of the deluge true?' To which Mr. Simpson replied,—'True! of course it is true. There was a local inundation, and some of the sacerdotal caste saved themselves in a punt, with their cocks and hens.'"

I forbear to inquire in what relation Mr. Mivart

stands towards Biblical criticism as applied to the New Testament. It is enough, for my present purpose, to observe that Christ always assumed the Scriptural narratives to be in the literal sense accurate. In proof of my assertion, I will remind my readers of the reference in the Gospels to the gift which Moses commanded, and to the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet. To the same effect are such texts as the following:—"As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man." "Remember Lot's wife." "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day." "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me." "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." It is manifest that the general view expressed in these and other passages is utterly opposed to the conclusions of Biblical critics, which are slowly leavening the educated world, and which Canon Fremantle and Mr. Mivart have quoted with substantial approval. The fact is, that enlightened Christians, whether Catholic or Protestant, are beginning to learn that their religion must adjust itself to the new conditions, and must rest rather on the spirit than on the letter of their Master's teaching. In short, we must needs admit that errors are to be

found in the words, even in the plainest words, of Christ, as reported by the Evangelists.* This admission impairs, to say the least, the importance of the obscure text—"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church." On what foundation, then, does the Papacy rest? Whatever answer Mr. Mivart might give to this question, it seems to follow from his principles that the Catholic Church is a tree which must be judged by its fruits—that she must stand or fall with her internal evidence, must be assailed and defended on Utilitarian grounds. And I am bound to add that, on those grounds, her case is, in many respects, a strong one, stronger than that of most Protestant sects, both because of her authority and universality, and also because she is less directly and obviously committed than they are to the belief in Scriptural infallibility.† Mr.

* See *Stones of Stumbling*, pp. 90–103. As an eminent living ecclesiastic has expressed it, the story of Jonah rests on the authority of the Incarnate God. Let me remind my readers that I am not calling in question the doctrine of the Incarnation. Orthodox divines, such as Jeremy Taylor and Frederick Robertson (*Stones of Stumbling*, p. 114), admitted that Christ, as a Man, might have been deceived.

† Is Scherer right in maintaining that mythology and ritual are needful supports of religion? If so, criticism, by weakening the first of these props, forces religion to lean heavily on the second. This may explain why Catholicism and Ritualism are suddenly renewing their strength.

Mivart insists that she will retain her jurisdiction over faith and morals. But, in regard to the latter, he is careful to point out that Popes and councils wrongly condemned usury; and even in regard to the former he admits that the Councils of Trent and of the Vatican took an exaggerated view of Biblical inspiration.

"Little by little," he says, "the invincible advance of historical, as of other, Science permeates and transforms the whole Catholic body, and ultimately reacts upon its supreme head. While the general sentiment of Catholics remains unchanged, the Holy See remains, as a rule, sympathetically unaltering in its action. But it follows with attention, though slowly and warily, the course of scientific thought and investigation. It cannot be expected to anticipate, by positive pronouncements, what is greatly in advance of general Catholic opinion. I have what seems to me sufficient evidence that broad views are not in disfavour at the Vatican, though sudden or abrupt action is neither to be expected nor desired. It is amply sufficient if a gradual change in the knowledge, the ideas, and the convictions of the Catholic body in due time overcomes a natural reluctance to forsake a beaten path, and, by degrees, induces conformity to a new environment. The slow, silent, indirect action of public opinion does in time infallibly produce its effect; and if, now and again, authority has yielded unduly to retrograde and obstructive influences, yet, as experience has shown us with respect to Copernicanism, it may end by thoroughly adopting what was at first resisted and denounced. No doubt it may astonish and vex some persons to be told that he who is officially the leader allows himself to be led. But he does so by a wise prescience, which is the ordinary characteristic of the supreme Pontiff."

Eleven years ago, in Italy, a devout Catholic

said to me, of Pius IX.,—"In private, he is a gossiping old woman; but, for all that, as a Pope, he is infallible." Catholics seem now prepared to admit that the intellectual and moral infirmities of the Pope may affect even his public decrees, at least in regard to all matters that admit of verification. Moreover, even the province in which he is held to be infallible—the province of matters unverifiable, and yet knowable—will seem to his educated followers to be continually lessening, insomuch that they will be more and more troubled by the question,—*If he tells us of earthly things and we believe not, how can we believe when he tells us of heavenly things?** To speak more precisely, does not the entire phenomenal world fall within the domain of the verifiable? And, as to things that lie above and beyond that world, how can we hope to conceive them with human faculties, or to express them, save metaphorically and relatively, by means of the earth-born analogies of human language—*immortalia mortali sermone notare?* Is there, then, a single religious question on which the

* I wonder whether, during the long misgovernment of the Papal States, pious Catholics were ever embarrassed by the text—"If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?"

Holy See is the unerring exponent of absolute truth? Be this as it may, the passage above quoted from Mr. Mivart amounts to an admission that the Pope is becoming, in his relation to the Church, less and less like the rudder of a ship, and more and more like the tail of a kite; or (to use an apter illustration), less of an Absolute and more of a Constitutional Sovereign. What, then, are likely to be his lasting prerogatives? As an outsider, I, of course, speculate on the subject with extreme diffidence. But I venture to suggest that (on the hypothesis) he will retain complete control over ceremonies and discipline; he will also pronounce, on matters of faith, decisions which the Catholic masses will accept as permanently and literally accurate; while Catholic philosophers will consider them, if not as mere symbols and *broken lights*, at least as liable to revision by his successors.

A very distinguished Catholic, writing to me last year, mildly intimated a hope that his Church would hereafter modify its views on eternal punishment; but added that, at present, he could "see no footstep in that direction." This whispered protest is full of promise. One is tempted to infer from it that the time may come when (to put the matter somewhat brutally) an

ordinary Catholic will say,—“The Pope bids me accept this or that doctrine, so I accept it”; whereas an intellectual Catholic will say (or think),—“As I value religious unity, I will not curse what the Pope hath not cursed; but I know he is wrong, and future Popes will agree with me.” Such an application of Amiel’s *ésoterisme inévitable* * is open to grave and very obvious objections. But, at any rate, let us hope that Catholics are beginning to look upon religious truth as relative, and religious knowledge as progressive. This, after all, is the fundamental point, and is especially desired by those who fear that religious evolution may be going on too fast, and who believe that a *cultus* is needful to almost every one; and that, in the process (so to say) of *Ecclesiastical Selection*, an advantage will be enjoyed by the Church which is surrounded by the brightest halo of antiquity, and which can unite the greatest number of educated and uneducated minds by a common symbol. The enlightened defenders of the faith, who think and feel thus, cannot but hope that the Catholic

* See the mottoes prefixed to my answers 3 and 4, in preceding article. A lady of orthodox tendencies, who was fresh from the perusal of *Literature and Dogma*, suddenly exclaimed, when reading p. 49 of Mr. Mivart’s article,—“Why, this is Matthew Arnold over again!”

Church will now show that wisdom which has distinguished her in the chief crises of her long career. She took a great step when she consented to apply the principle of *E pur si muove* to our planet. She will take a greater step if she applies it to her own religious teaching. By thus taking part in the onward movement, she will give reality to an assertion which has little in common with sundry well-known utterances of Pius IX., but which is quoted approvingly by Mr. Mivart—the tolerant and wisely catholic assertion that “this is a time of drawing together of all religions and philosophies, and of the rapid growth of a universal religious consciousness with the development of human introspection. We see, on all sides of us, that ceaseless, invisible magic of thought—thought profoundly scientific, and no less profoundly spiritual—which is casting its net over all religions.” In this grouping together of “all religions,” is it not implied that the difference between the great and good religions of the world, however prodigious in degree, is a difference in degree rather than in kind?

